

Designing the Future of Museums

► National Museum of Finland



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**What kind of meanings can we attach to museums in the future,
and what kind of concepts can we develop to reach this goal?**

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{ Intro }





Project in a Nutshell

Background

National Museum illustrates Finnish history from medieval times to the 19th century. The museum's unique exhibits tell of the life from a period of over 1000 years.

Theme & Approach

Digitalization, virtual reality, augmented reality, and other new technological advances are changing the ways we interact with each other and our cultural heritage. At the same time, our consumption patterns are transformed and shaped by smart devices, yet our perceptions of museums remain antiquated.

Thus, the question is, how could we approach museums in a novel way? How could we develop new ways to interact with our cultural heritage? What could we actually do with museums and all their collections?

This project is not about simply implementing new technologies to the museum context, but instead rethinking the very foundations of museums.

Team

The IDBM team collaborated with National Museum of Finland. Group of IDBM students divided into two teams, which each developed concepts for future Museum of Cultures. The teams' approach is multidisciplinary. The represented disciplines are business, technology and design.

Left:

The building of The National Museum of Finland from South
 Photo by National Board of Antiquities, Arno de la Chapelle, 2000

Foreword

“I warmly invite all those interested in museums of the future to read this report and to consider its findings when developing museum practices.

On behalf of The National Museum of Finland, I would first like to thank The Aalto University and the International Design Business Management (IDBM) program for excellent and inspiring co-operation. The report at hand exhibits valuable foresight into the opportunities to be seized by The Museum in the future at both conceptual and practical levels. Even though our co-operation focused on the Museum of Cultures, the results are scalable to address the future of museums in general. As such the report is a valuable read to all working with or interested in developing museums of the future.

The students from the IDBM program were invited to approach the concept of The Museum of Cultures from a novel perspective. Like any mature industry, museums are also likely to be blinded by the dominant logic of the industry. To overcome the influence of established and shared propositions and beliefs attached to the concept of “museum”, the project approached this concept from a multidisciplinary design perspective. The report exhibits the evident and outstanding power gained by combining business, design as well as technological know-how and research in working out novel solutions. Such multidisciplinary approach surely enriches both the process as well as innovation outcome.

The result provides a fresh and an inspirational basis for developing museums both as physical or virtual spaces as well as creating novel museum practices. All was guided by the meaning attached to the concept of museum rather than established practices utilised in museums. The report also invites the reader to see beyond the familiar and the obvious to discover novel approaches to realising the core meaning attached to the museum. Such a discovery is scalable to the museum genre in general.

I warmly invite all those interested in museums of the future to read this report and to consider its findings when developing museum practices. For us, the report provides a valuable tool for developing the Museum of Cultures.

Jonna Heliskoski
Director of marketing and communications
The National Museum of Finland

Introduction

“What you are about to read is their vision of how museums could look like in the future and a collection of design-driven actions that we can take today to realize that vision.”

Traditionally museums have been regarded as physically bound spaces where people could admire or study objects of historical or aesthetic value. Indeed, museums have been doing excellent work in preserving our national and cultural heritage, but as a side effect we have collectively typecast them as repositories for the past. In order to break away from this semiotic language, a group of students from Aalto University's International Design Business Management (IDBM) program embarked on a project looking at what kind of meanings could we attach to museums in the future. What you are about to read is their vision of how museums could look like in the future and a collection of design-driven actions that we can take today to realize that vision.

While at first sight combining museums with design might sound like an odd couple, there are, in fact, tremendous benefits in doing so. During the 20th century design was to a large extent about shaping physical objects: architecture, industrial design, and graphic design were all harnessed to conjure beautiful buildings, chairs, and logos, for example. In a sense, then, design was confined in a relatively small space and designer's role was often simply to follow the management's orders and wishes. But the first two decades of the 21st century have changed everything, and today design is seen as a crucial element in creating innovations and solving complex problems. Thus,

design has permeated both societal and organizational layers and its strength lies in providing propositions on how things could look like in the future. Since design is future-oriented and museums are repositories of the past, exploring how we could combine these into one single trajectory becomes evident.

The student group from our IDBM program were the perfect agents in driving the change on how we could understand the role of museums in the future. Having an interest in museums and coming from different disciplinary backgrounds ensured that they were able to approach the setting with a fresh pair of eyes while not ignoring the historical legacy of museums. Such multidisciplinary collaboration is at the heart of IDBM and Aalto University in general, and I am proud to say that this white paper and its design-driven propositions are both provocative and respectful.

I hope you will find our students' report both inspiring and engaging!

Miikka J. Lehtonen
Visiting Assistant Professor
Aalto University

Process Description

During the past 10 weeks, we have been working on finding fresh, meaningful but operational ideas for what museums can be in the near-future, or as stated according to the brief by Miikka J. Lehtonen, the project leading professor:

What kind of meanings can we attach to museums in the future, and what kind of concepts can we develop to reach this goal?

To make the most valuable ideas under the intense schedule, we, seven students, split into two teams; Team A & Team B. We shared the process similarly but the final concepts and ideas are positively differ.

Our process is based on the double-diamond model developed by the Design Council UK in 2005. Originally, the four main stages are; discover, define, develop and deliver, which form two cycles of divergence and convergence. We adopted the process and transformed it into six main stages in consideration of the schedule and the deliverable; **Research, Ideate, Define, Test, Develop and Deliver.**

1. Research: Find topic-related key trends (A/B)

In order to understand the future of museums, the project started with extensive research on topics related to the up-coming technologies, lifestyle changes and societal phenomenon. As a part of our research we visited Kiasma, Helsinki City Museum and Arabia Museo including an interview with the manager of Helsinki City Museum. Plus, we attended a seminar by Victoria & Albert museum's Rapid-Response-Collecting team, and reviewed topic-related literatures and current issues. After researching in multiple trending fields that will have the greatest impact on near-future museums, we set the trends out into the scanning card format.

2. Ideate: Scanning card workshop (A+B)

After sorting and identifying the key trends, we had a workshop with employees from the National Museum of Finland and other participants. The purpose of the workshop was testing and discussing the collected trends in order to draw a shared big picture of the future museum in a collaborative way. First, we individually commented all the scanning cards, then we explained and discussed the thoughts and perspectives in a group. In the end of the workshop, the trends were categorized into five key change areas; **Robotization, Digitalization, Urbanization, Aging Society and Rising Cultural Interest.**

3. Define: New meaning of the museum (A/B)

We looked closer into actual meanings for the Museum of Cultures in near-future within the key change areas. After an intense brainstorming session, each team could define and frame trends and ideas into three greater concepts.

Team A: 1. Museum as Meaningful Experiences,
2. Museum as a Bridge, 3. Museum as a Spreader
Team B: 1. Connecting to Cultures, 2. Make It
Personal, 3. Breaking Bad

4. Test: Interim presentation (A+B)

Once all the key trends and diverse ideas blended into the concepts, we tested the concepts with National Museum employees. Each team presented the new meanings of the future museum, and many valuable feedback and perspectives from the museum side were collected. One concept each was selected or was synthesized in teams after the testing and internal evaluation session.

Team A: **Museum as a Bridge**
Team B: **Active Agent in Modern Culture**

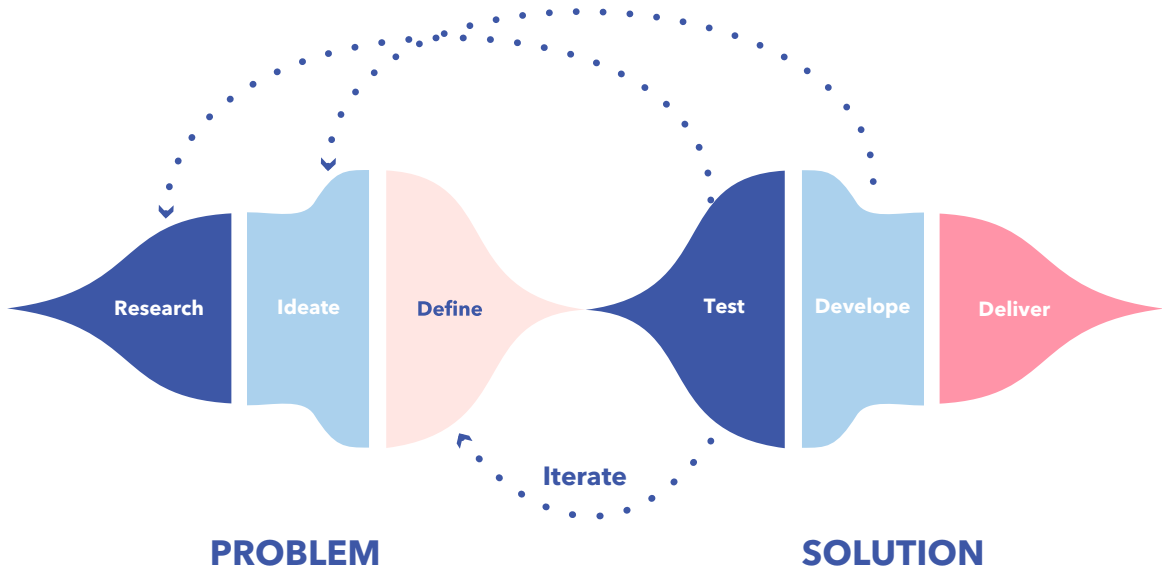


Fig 0.1. six main stages of the project

5. Develop: Evaluate and consolidate ideas (A/B)

To reach our goal - envision novel but operational ideas for what Museum of Cultures can be in the near-future - we had a final ideation workshop. Each team came up with more than 30 ideas in the end of the workshop. After that, we went back to see how well our ideas were fitting into the first brief given to us. Teams evaluated all the ideas with the help of an idea portfolio with two parameters; novelty and engagement. After the evaluation, four operational ideas from Team A and three operational ideas from Team B were consolidated.

Team A: 01. Museum of Modern Cultures,
02. Museum as a Forum, 03. Problem Solving
Together, 04. Kids Exhibition

Team B: 01. Better Together, 02. Spreading the
Culture, 03. Break the Rules

6. Deliver: White book (A+B)

The final phase of the project is sharing all the documented deliverable from our side with the client. This report explains first the current situation of the museum and surrounding changes, after which we are focusing the rest of the report on expanding the chosen concepts with operational ideas as well as strategic proposals.

A/B: Work separately in Team A and Team B

A+B: Work together in IDBM team

Part 1

1.1. Meaning Museum Now

Before thinking out ideas for the museums in the future, it is vital to see the current status of museum to understand the relations around it. With the workshops, teams explored the current circumstance of museum nowadays while looking through its ecosystem and trends.

Museum is surrounded by various sectors as having several roles in our society. The ecosystem of the museum explains the relationships with the relevant sectors. Furthermore, the current trends in society also affect museum to shape its concepts and themes of the exhibition.



An archaeologist and a museum master,
building a pre-history exhibition
Photo by The National Museum of Finland, 2017

{ Museum Now }



1.2. Ecosystem of Museum

As a first task, teams developed the ideas about the museum's ecosystem, especially focusing on the relationships around the museum.

Mainly the museum offers services to the audience who are the customers of the place, as a sort of entertainment industry. Being an educational organization, museum interacts with the state and other educational organizations while sharing the educational system. To manage the museum itself, the connection with sponsors and donators is essential relationship, including religious organizations when it comes to historical remains. Other than this, it plays more diverse roles.

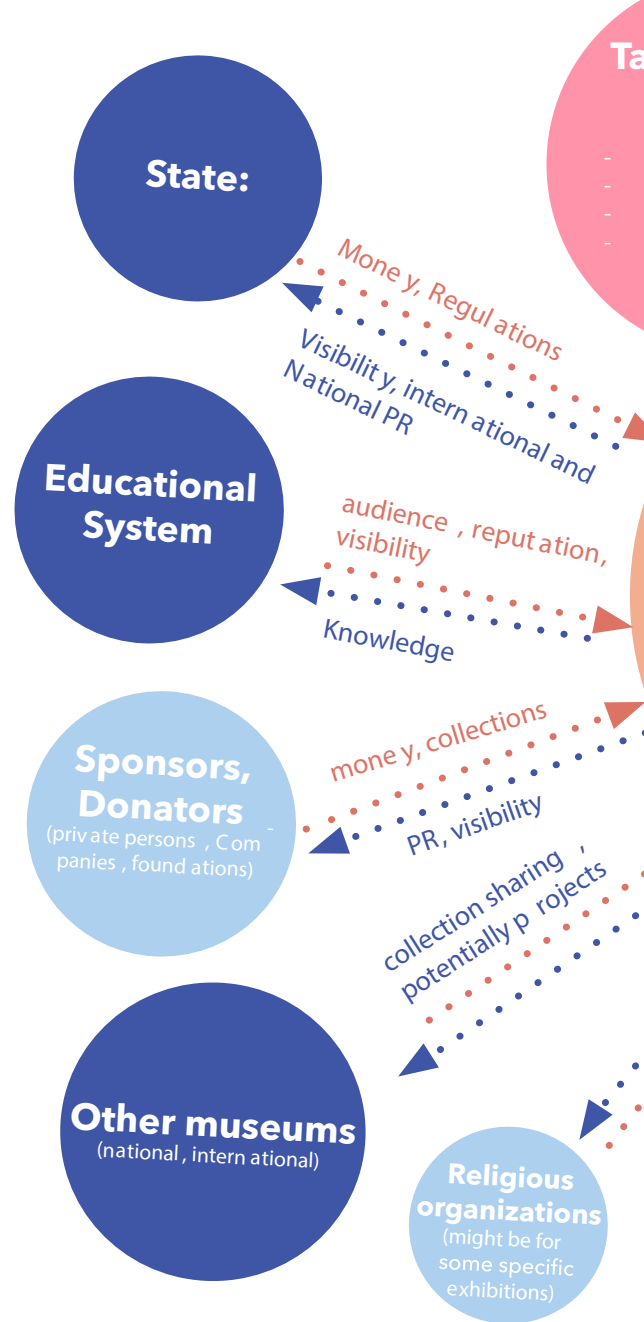
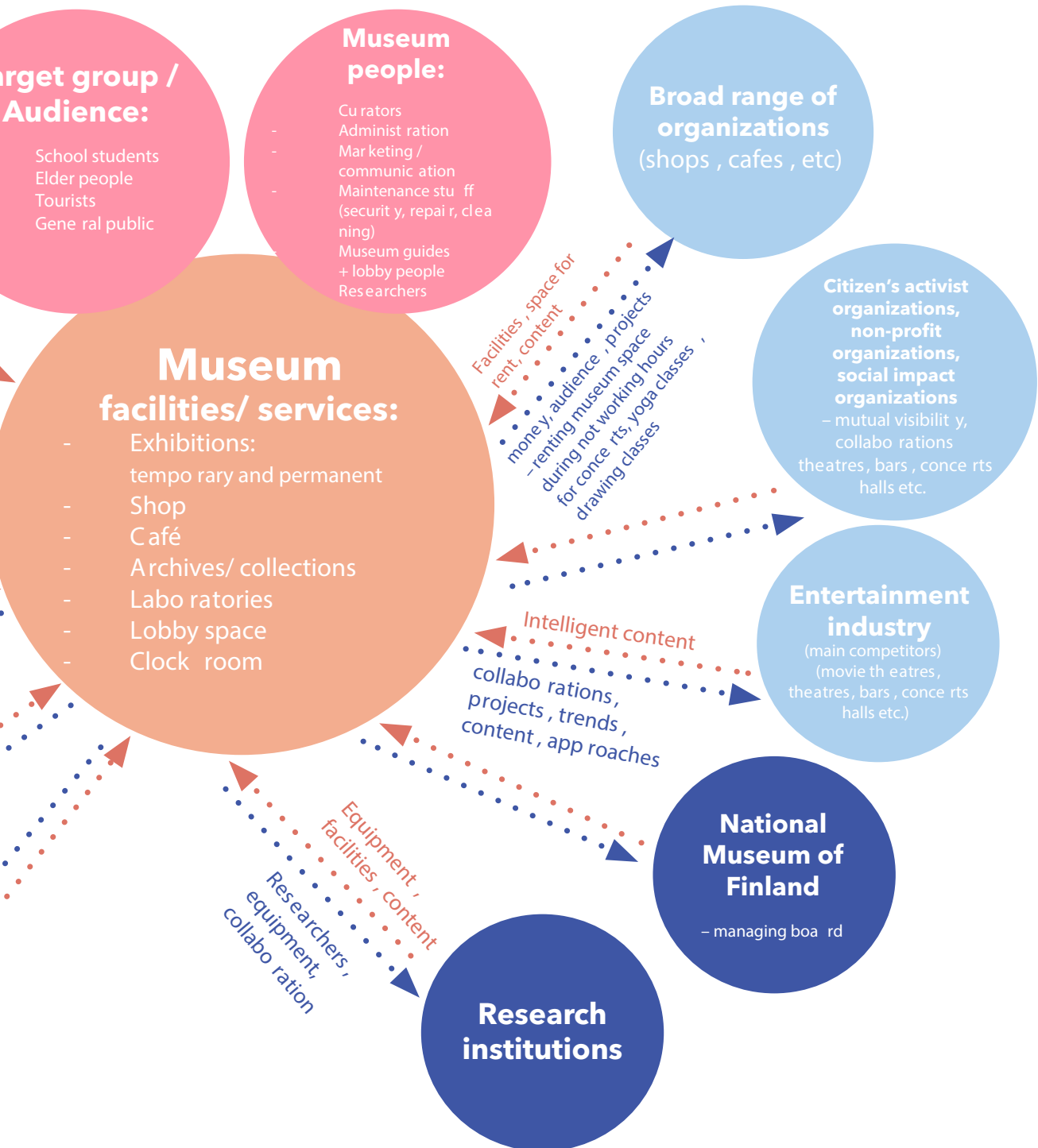


Fig 1.1. museum ecosystem map



1.3. Trends Shaping Museums

“It’s a different world we’re going into but it’s all based on the Internet. It’s all based on these connections. If you start limiting the connections, you’re going backwards as a society.” — Glenn Beck

From the workshop of sharing *scanning cards from each team, some of main trends are categorized as **Robotization, Digitalization, Urbanization, Aging Society and Rising Cultural Interest.**

Robotization

With an interest to have more convenience and advanced technology, robotization is no longer a sci-fi story. The robot technology has many applications already in diverse areas such as manufacturing, healthcare and entertainment industry. Still stories are discussed about how the robotization help our society much prospering while concerning fear through the rise of the machines.

Digitalization

Integrated digital technologies have been applied in all aspects of human society. This phenomena has enabled the new technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things), big data, machine to machine communication and etc. The digitalization also gives us holistic views on societal change in business development, as providing easy accessibility.

Urbanization

More than one half of the world population lives now in urban areas, and virtually all countries of the world are becoming increasingly urbanized. In this circumstance, the urbanization will bring extreme transformations in social, economical and environmental way. With the population density, the problematic issues like transportation, inequality, energy supply and pollution should be discussed.

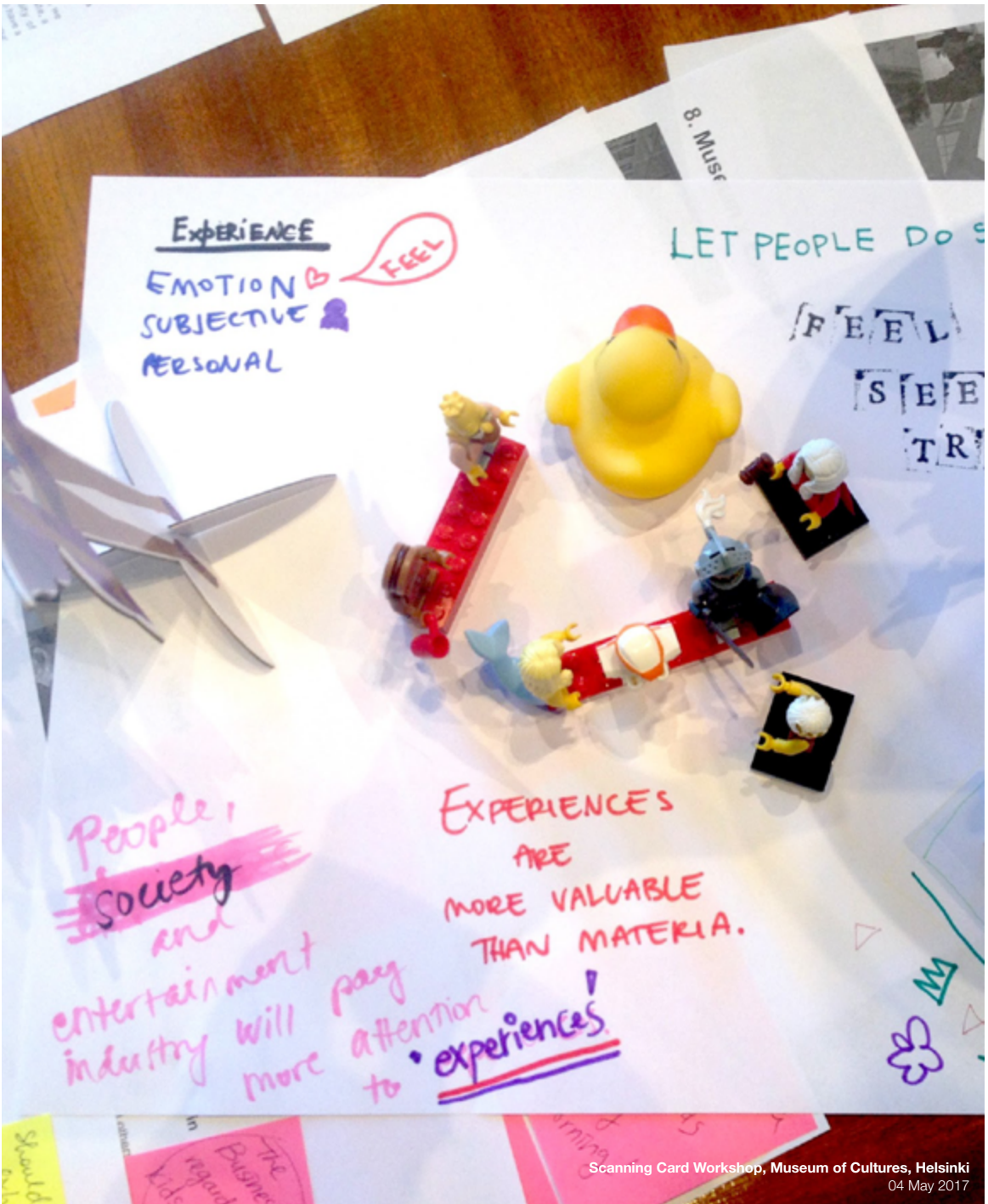
Aging society

The age of population is rising. We are living in the highest level of aged population in human history. Young generations tend to delay the marriage and childbirth, and thanks to well developed industrial advantages, the life expectancy is increasing. Supporting senior citizens has become an important social issue with lower fertility rate.

Rising cultural interest

Once Globalization had been out of dated, people started to concern their locality, authenticity and humanity. We call this cultural trend as Rising cultural interest. Along with the development of SNS (Social Networking Service), the interest is even increasing. People are showing and sharing not just their brunch pictures but also, their opinions on same sex marriage, heritage terrorism and refugee issues.

**Scanning cards: Any ideas or articles related to the future of museums described shortly with the relevant image in a card format to share it easily with others.*



{ Future Museum }

Concept A.

"Bending Circuits!"
Electronics Hacking Workshop, Kiasma, Helsinki
Field research. 22 April 2017

Part 2

2.1. Meaning Museum as a Bridge

Being a metaphorical bridge, museums transmit understanding of the past generations to the present one. Furthermore, museums teach how to avoid mistakes of the past, improve current circumstances and build ground for a better future. This way all museums have an essential role in the society as a spreader of knowledge, empathy, tolerance and diversity.

Museums keep our focus on human issues and help us to understand, that in actuality, there are more things connecting all of our experiences, and us, rather than separating us. Museums link people from different time-periods, generations, backgrounds, religions and cultures.



2.2. Operational Idea 01. Museum of Modern Cultures

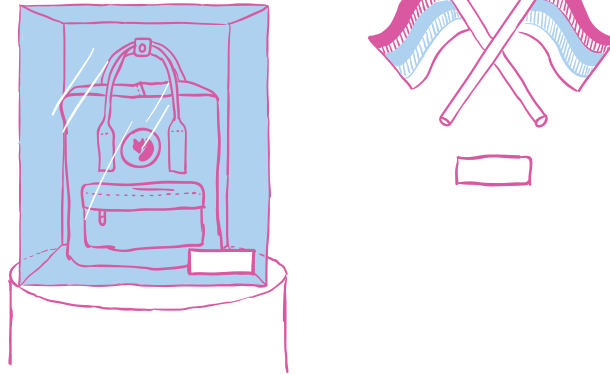


Fig 2.1. museum of modern cultures

Cultures are constantly changing. New cultures arise, old cultures die or mutate. Museum of Cultures, having a scientific approach how to investigate, analyze and present to public historical cultures, could be a best place to collect the understanding about current cultures. The museum will interpret different modern cultures in dynamic and open-ended manner helping us to understand our place and cultures to which we attribute ourselves.

Museum will investigate and challenge old and modern cultures and their perceived differences. Museum will answer such questions as; what are the core elements of culture, by which means the culture presents itself to public, what are the value that specific culture adepts want to transmit into the society. Who are hipsters, geeks, nerds? What is the history of gay and lesbian movements? Museum, being a bridge between past, present and future, will build parallels and show us the ground roots of modern cultures.

Exhibitions of modern cultures

Culture being a set of characteristic features of everyday existence shared between groups of people is one of the core elements that reflects us as personalities. Thus, people will come to museum to find a ground or a flaw in their interpretation of cultures where they see themselves or their environment.

Museum can exhibit artefacts reflecting current cultures, invite people to present or be a voice of their cultures, make interactive exhibitions, make “cultural testing” to understand, to which of modern cultures person can most likely be attributed, provide a platform for modern cultures discussion clubs.

2.3. Operational Idea 02. Museum as a Forum

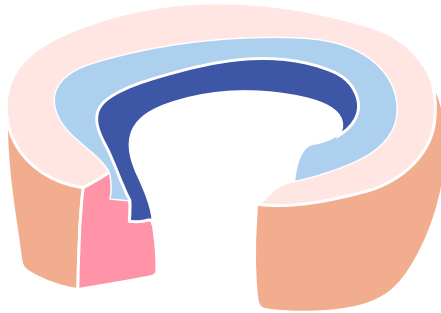


Fig 2.2. museum as a forum

A place to share and discuss own knowledge and thoughts

Mostly people visit museum not only to see the things, but also to feel and to imagine. Likewise the concept 'Museum as a Bridge', the museum will have its role as a forum which provides an opportunity to share the experiences and emotions from the exhibition. The discussion could be any relevant issues to the theme of exhibition and any other related social problems. In this sense, the museum would connect different opinions and even between the knowledge from past to future as a bridge.

Visitors might get inspired while touring the exhibitions. As serving as forums for dialogue around the experiences related to the exhibition, it would encourage people to think more, even to out of bounds. Museums are looking to create emotional experiences that inspire visitors to take action. As a bridge of differences, this forum would connect different opinions and let them be shared. Furthermore, this forum would provide the opportunity to discuss about the way of new development from the past knowledge to the modern society. The differences from different culture and different epoch could be recreated as a new inspiration to the visitors.

Forum to share the inspirations

Under this concept as 'forum', museum would provide the discussion programs for visitors to share their experiences after seeing the exhibition. This forum platform would be connected with a guide program with curator so that visitors could inspire themselves while appreciate the objects during the tour with the historical explanations. After the tour, visitors will share their own inspirations from the exhibitions. The participants age range varies from young kids to elders to provide the chance to hear and think of what other generations' thought in general.

Forum to discuss about what happened yesterday

It is not that difficult to find similar social problems of nowadays in the history. The discussion for democracy has been announced from ancient greek society. Likewise the quote, 'History repeats itself', it would be valuable to discuss about the historical issues related to the exhibition. Sharing the knowledge and opinions about the history could evoke the new understanding of the social problems and the solutions.

2.4. Operational Idea 03. Problem Solving Together

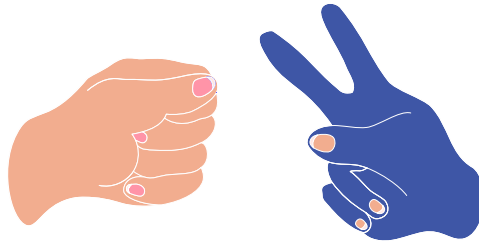


Fig 2.3. problem solving together

Share the social role with responsibility

The museum is not just a building anymore. It is a platform which is connected with and to the society, and is also sharing same social problems. As a bridge between the public and the society, the future museum will bring social problems into relationship with the audience. It would perform its role as a platform to suggest the solutions of environmental, political, economical problems in our society. As facilitating active and vital sharing of the social issues, museums will lead more valuable cultural movements.

Theme from the social issue

Museums will be challenging and engage with contemporary issues and will share provocative questions. They set the theme from the social issues as using the collections and stories to inform the present issues and inspire the future of us. It could be a centric place to encourage diverse voices to bring fresh perspectives about social problems.

Example: About the climate change issues – set the theme as a “Disappeared civilizations from the climate disaster” or “Weather x Culture”.

The climate issue is one of the most severe issue we are facing. With the story of the weather problems and selecting collections related to the climate, the new exhibition will alert visitors the severity of the environmental problems and encourage to think of social responsibilities for the issue. Related programs like inviting activists and artists who are working for the climate issues to discuss with the audience can be an option.

Under the theme as sharing social problems, the museum will be a hub of the participants for social problem solving. It will connect publics with the society and also connect the historical facts and collections to the modern artists and activists. As providing meaningful experiences to the audience, the museums will continue own social role actively and lead campaigns in the society. To engage in social issues and problem solving, the collaborative works with different professionals like scientists, historians, ecologists or anthropologists would be essential. In this sense, museum will be a platform to bring diverse intellectuals into the problems.

2.5. Operational Idea 04. Kids Exhibition

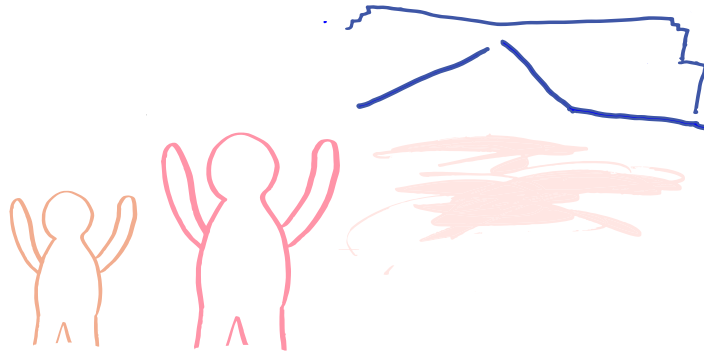


Fig 2.4. kids exhibition

Interactive and real workshops for kids in exhibition area

The concept of “Museum as a Bridge between past and future” is demonstrated and put to action with workshops for kids inside the museum space. The idea was to create co-creation workshops for kids on relevant topics in the display area. Teaching the future generations empathy, tolerance and appreciation for diversity is a meaningful and honorable task which suited well for museums.

Furthermore, when kids are engaged and happy, parents are as well. By telling their friends, teachers and parents about their great experiences, museum will gain positive word to mouth reputation. This can contribute to a more positive image and being perceived as relevant plus recognition for the Museum of Cultures. What is more, with the concept, the strict division between exhibition space and others areas in the museum is diminished, therefore making the museum seem more inviting.

Everyone, especially kids, enjoys learning by trying and making things. This is why we believe the workshops for kids should be interactive and entail prototyping or concrete doing along with discussing and reflecting the cultural theme chosen. Everybody, especially kids, want to make something by his/herself and show it at home. Moreover, this is how more adults (the kids parents) would be impacted and therefore interaction between future and past generation would also be generated at by the action. Furthermore the interesting aspect would be “the future educating the past”, kids teaching their parents about the themes and issues they learned.

All things considered, simplifying complex cultural, social or historic concepts and themes to kids level will make them more fun, entertaining and appealing, also for adults. By translating complex issues into understandable content general audience and future generations (kids) will presumably understand different point of views and grasp the possibility to act together to build something compassionate and communal.

2.6. Other Ideas

Among three different concepts; **1. Museum as Meaningful Experiences**, **2. Museum as a Bridge**, **3. Museum as a Spreader**, team A chose our final concept as **2. Museum as a Bridge** and presented relevant three main ideas. For the workshop to develop the main ideas, each team of us prepared the 20 different scanning cards of ideas. This chapter will present our unadapted ideas from scanning cards.

1. Museum as Meaningful Experiences

Much more experiences will be provided by museum in near future. Some of other ideas developed during our workshop are here.

- *Relax Museum*: Museum could propose relaxing space - more focusing on adults who will be willing to come to escape from stressful life. Virtual reality can help people to plunge into exceptional experience of understanding art: combining music, pictures and items from collections much related to the relaxed nature atmosphere.
- *Museum x Escape room*: Integrate escape room logic to the planning and execution of exhibitions. Make people experience museums and exhibitions in a more exciting, engaging and modern way.
- *Blind Museum Visit*: Museums could have special weekends when the exhibitions are designed to be experienced with only touching and hearing. It will provide unique experiences to the visitors and also demonstrate the different point of view.
- *5 Senses Museum*: People can experience with 5 senses in the museum - extend the experience with whole senses: Sight (vision), hearing (audition), taste (gustation), smell (olfaction), and touch (somatosensation). e.g. Workshops for renaissance tea class with the music listening, experiencing popular tea cultures in renaissance period - touch, smell, taste, see the tea leaves of the period.

2. Museum as a Bridge

As we selected three ideas as a main, there are still more ideas as a concept of 'bridge' mostly between the past and the future.

- *Museum in your Life*: Set up the pop up museum in the city center area or in the village to make people experience the museum in daily life. The theme would be much familiar issues such as vegan lifestyle or digitalization in daily life.
- *Time machine VR*: Using VR machines to travel old days of the village we are live in. Let people feel about the histories of the village they are living more vividly so that imagine the street and buildings in early days before our birth.

3. Museum as a Spreader

Museum will provide ethical values to the public as a spreader. The values would be the empathy, the tolerance and the diversity which make visitors to understand more about the societal issues and relationship in global atmosphere.

- *Pocket Museum / VR Room:* Pocket Museum introduces the knowledge and great museum experience to children who live in remote area through VR technology. It would extend the educational experiences for the kids in different continents and also museum can exhibit collections in limited places with VR technology.
- *Falsity Collector:* No more fake news. As the Internet connection is easy from everyone in everywhere, it became easier to connect plenty of wrong information. Museum could be an authoritative organizations helping publics to identify truth and falsity with supports of diverse experts. However still risky points of defining the 'truth'.
- *Collective Curation:* Visitors can be a curator. Ranking the theme of exhibition theme in the museum website. Hence the public can be more engaged into the museum exhibitions as providing a feeling of ownership.



Scanning Cards Workshop, Museum of Cultures, Helsinki
04 May 2017

Part 3

3.1. Meaning Active Agent in Modern Culture

The future museum is a conversation opener present and latent issues. It's provoking people to discuss and interact with trends and phenomenon. People's need to connect with cultures and to have an impact on modern culture will be filled in future museum. Museum will provide a platform for people to communicate and engage with intercultural ways. As a result, museum is more important part of society, and its operations are adapting to the modern culture. People's input towards museum's operations shapes more unique and personalized experiences for its audience.

Museums of the future is active and present in different medias – bringing their collections straight to the public. It connects with audience on variety of places beyond its own physical location. Its presence in places where the public is, lessening people's the need to actively search information and experiences. The future museum is going to be more equal and democratic, hence the exhibitions are spreading into community.

Museums are competing with other forms of spending time. In the future museums are offering more wow-effects to its visitors. Museum will let people to discover and gain knowledge by entertaining and engaging emotionally. It will not take for granted people's interest to culture but is active when encountering public.



{ Future Museum }

Concept B.

Future Museum / Active Agent in Modern Culture

"New Social Meeting Possibilities"

Table-reset exhibition view, Arabia Museo, Helsinki

Field research. 13 April 2017

3.2. Operational Idea 01. Better Together

We recognized a growing trend that, in general, people want to share and communicate their daily experiences with others through SNS with diverse types of communication medium. Instagram contains 220,158,010 pictures with #food (when this text was written), 1 million links are shared on Facebook in 20 minutes, and Snapchatters watch over 10 billion videos per day. We call this phenomena 'Co-experience'.

Better together is about enhancing our monologue museum experiences into the co-experience stage by sharing and communicating with all art & culture lovers from the world. Visitors aspire to be an active ambassador for the museum and, furthermore, are encouraged to confront different cultures, diverse thoughts to make culturally mature society in a fun way.

Teleport

Teleport is a communication platform which visitors can share 3D printed artefacts, voices, texts, and even themselves digitally to anonymous over the world. It mainly consists of input-tools: touch-screens, mics, typewriters, cameras, and output-tools: speakers/headphones, screens, 2D/3D printers.

Once, a Finnish visitor shares his/her favorite Finnish artefacts with own comments through the platform, then one visitor in South Korea will receive it instantly as a gift. And it works in other way around, too. Those gifts can highlight the experience in the museum as unique and novel souvenirs within a co-experience and authentic way. Furthermore, all the shared and gifted goods, comments, and thoughts will be archived into the platform where anyone can access for just fun or research purposes.

Culture Roulette

Culture Roulette is a live multi-communication, wall-sized screen where visitors can discuss on cultural or artistic topics, or will just say hello to others located in different countries and regions. The channel, however has some limitation as a communication tool. Audio & sound equipment and typewriters are not offered. Therefore, people will draw on the screen directly or use their body-language to communicate, in order to encourage more people can participate easily and quickly.

With this limitations, people from anywhere can communicate without language problems like from Finnish to Serbian and from Russian to Japanese. The subtle gestures can escalate individual experiences up to the co-experience level to visitors effectively and instantly. To increase serendipitous engagement and visibility, the screen can be also installed in other public sectors as airports, tram stations or even in a fire place of national parks.

Along with the trend; rising cultural interest, people are willing to experience authentic cultures and to hear stories from real people. And this platform will treat them with easy access and rich contents. Everyone in the museum can interact with others globally as cultural ambassadors within the platform.

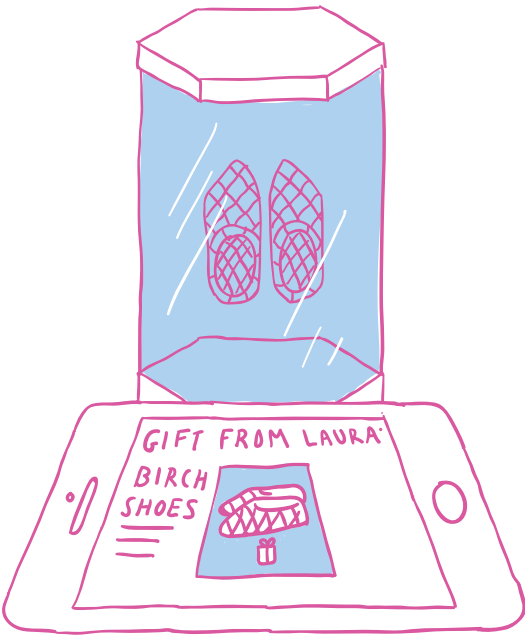


Fig 3.1. the teleport platform / right: the culture roulette screen

3.3. Operational Idea 02. Spreading the Culture

Spreading the Culture is a business model which allows private institutions to lend art which is temporarily not exhibited in the museum.

The National Museum of Finland owns a great quantity of artefacts which can not be exhibited due to its limited spaces. Opening new museums is an complicated option since it would require suitable space and additional resources. Spreading the Culture brings cultural heritage to third party places and to wider range of people. This will lead to an increasing visibility of the entire collection, but create the opportunity to generate a new income stream through lending art.

This idea targets current economic trends such as sharing economy and pop-up retailing. While the sharing economy is optimizing the utilization of an object by sharing it with various users, pop-up stores have become an attractive tool to showcase and sell products at short-term sales spaces where they get an extreme number of viewers and buyers. Additionally, Spreading the Culture touches the trend that people are seeking to explore other cultures while building their individual personality through cultural knowledge. This concept will enable people and institutions to express and gain cultural knowledge at different locations outside of a museum.

Cultural Subscription: an art subscription model for private institutions

The operational idea Cultural Subscription is a subscription business model which maximizes the number of exhibit pieces of art while generating more income. Only art pieces which are temporarily not exhibited in collections will be available for private institutions to rent. These institutions will pay an annual subscription fee which allows them to pick available pieces for a certain time period. The frequency of the replacement of the art piece and its value is depending on the contract. Subscribers must fulfill certain conditions like security, credit quality and spatial conditions (etc. humidity, temperature) in order to take advantage of this unique service. The generated income can easily cover the expenses of additional operation costs.

Subscribers could be private medium-size institutions or smaller which usually don't want to invest in a single art piece but desire owning and showcasing art in their properties in order to impress visitors and to upgrade their facilities. Potential clients could be medical practice, law offices, banks and airport lounges for instance.

The idea of sharing exclusive property for rent has been successful in other branches like housing (Airbnb) or car industry. The subscription model would increase and guarantee the circulation of the temporarily non exhibited art hence will increase its visibility.

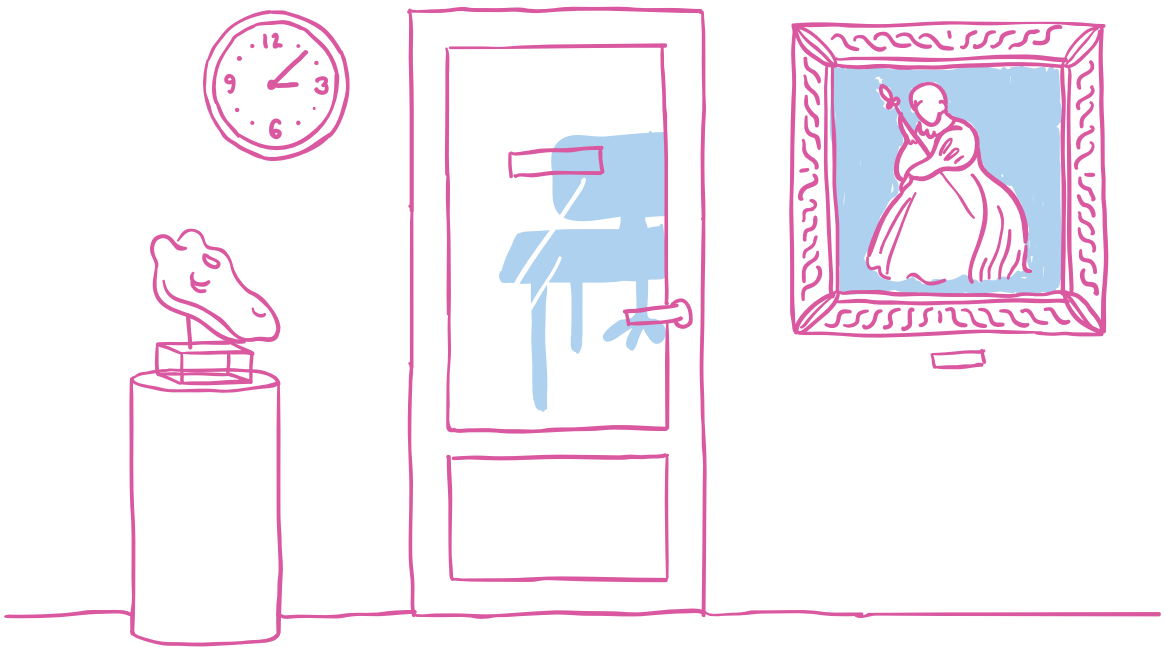


Fig 3.2. an office with cultural subscription

3.4. Operational Idea 03. Break the Rules

Break the Rules is series of events and exhibitions that question the way of how people are used to behave and engage with museums. Break the Rules operation wants people to connect with museums in new ways, provoke conversation and give experiences that one has not had in a seemingly conservative environment. Break the Rules questions what kind of material is sacred and what kind of emotions one can have when connecting with the cultural past in a new way.

Break the Rules is for people who want to encounter museums more emotional and memorable way. It is for people who learn by feeling and interacting and who are looking for new experiences. It's providing extreme way of having an effect on culture and cultural conversation.

Break the Rules engages with visitors that are looking for new unique experiences. It provokes people to take action and to continue conversations. The motivation for the museum is to get attention of the visitors who are used to extreme experiences and may feel that traditional museum is not giving enough goose bumps.

Smash the Art exhibition

In Smash the Art exhibition and events, the audience can vote what kind of tools and methods museum should use for breaking art pieces. Museum invites people to vote in their social networks and inside the museum. The breaking tools will vary tremendously from hydraulic press machine to dane axe, from acid liquids to a wrecking ball. Broken pieces will be shared with museum visitors, so everybody can have a piece of diminished history with them.

Smash the Art encourages people to think by extreme interaction, what kind of things from past are sacred and what is the worth of cultural history. The exhibition provokes conversation in different medias and connects past to present issues. It offers personalized, un-repeatable experience for participants.

One of the aims is to connect with visitors outside of the museum. Voting process in different platforms will engage visitors outside the museum space. The goal is to be present in cultural conversation in different medias – from coffee table to Facebook.

Future scenario: Provocative press release of how the museum don't have space and funding so they are destroying their collections - and piece of cultural history.

Helsinki, May 23, 2022 – National Museum of Finland invites people to help with destroying part of their collections

National Museum of Finland has decided to destroy parts of its unique collections due to limited storage space. Museum is now inviting public to take part of breaking the pieces by voting what tools are used for destroying the art. You can find the listing of the pieces that are going to be destroyed from website: kansallismuseo.fi/Smashtheart. One can also vote and suggest the tools in the same site and by submitting suggestions via National Museum of Finland Facebook, Twitter and Instagram page.

National Museum of Finland wants also warmly invite people to participate to the destroying events. The events are taking their place at National Museum in every Friday from August to December.

National Museum of Finland's mission is to be part of public conversation about meaning of art and culture. The organization wants to preserve culture to future generations.



Fig 3.3. smash the art exhibition on SNS

3.5. Other Ideas

As mentioned in the previous chapter about the progress, we went through workshops and brainstorming sessions in order to clarify the meaning of the future museums, but also to generate ideas. The process can be described as the double-diamond strategy. After the first idea generation we converted to three main concepts (**Connecting to Cultures, Make It Personal, Breaking Cultures**). During the second stage we created several ideas within these concepts. We have described the selected ideas in the previous pages and list in this page all other ideas. Since we focused on operational ideas for the National Museum of Finland, all our ideas are either exhibitions or events.

1. Connecting To Cultures

- *Culture To All Senses - Smell, Sound & Taste* - **exhibition**: Other human senses should be activated in order to enhance the experience of an cultural exhibition. Culture can be connected to smell, temperature, sound and taste.
- *Wanderlust* - **event**: Cultural theme nights organized inside the museum. Connecting travel experiences with cultural heritage and exhibitions.
- *Cultural Mixing Day* - **event**: Different nations present their culture in an open event. Food, music and dancing will connect cultures and raises interest and knowledge.
- *Pop-up Museum* - **exhibition**: Exhibitions will be located at public hubs where people are confronted with culture. Potential places could be the airport, train station, ferry port and squares. *Walking In Different Shoes* - **exhibition**: This exhibition will leverage the empathy of its visitor while encouraging the person to slip into a different point of view.
- *Sharing Experience* - **exhibition or event**: Visitors are animate in to contribute to the exhibitions by sharing experiences with the exhibit art or culture. This will leverage different thinking and trigger dialogue between visitors.

2. Make It Personal

- *Own Face Everywhere* - **exhibition**: Visitors are able with the help of Mixed Reality to project faces of friends or themselves on sculptures and paintings while passing the exhibition.
- *Finding Similarities* - **exhibition or event**: Visitors are animate to find similarities with other previous and future visitors. This engaging exhibition can further bridge cultures.
- *Cultural Decision Making* - **exhibition**: An interactive and engaging exhibition will animate the visitors to go through decision making of other countries and cultures.

3. Breaking Rules

- *Inappropriate behavior* - **exhibition**: People are encouraged to make dummies and replicas of artwork. Furthermore, visitors can engage with the replicas in a way that it wouldn't be allowed with the authentic pieces; touch, take pictures with flash, paint mustaches, write comments – even steal them.
- *Fake Auction* - **event series**: Imitating a real auction of pieces which are currently not exhibited. The art pieces are offered for a certain period and have a minimum bidding price.
- *Nasty Comments* - **exhibition**: With the help of new technologies, visitors are able to envision virtual nasty comments sculptures and painting could have.
- *Destroy One Belonging* - **exhibition or event**: Visitors are able to destroy on belonging they are carrying with them.
- *Dark Room* - **exhibition**: Blind dining has been a demanded experience in the latest years. How would people experience museums in the dark. Laser pointer on the floor will outline other visitors and corners.



Co-creation Workshop, Museum of Cultures, Helsinki
04 May 2017

Part 4

4.1. Outlook

For this project, both teams were asked to envision the meaning of museums and furthermore to generate operational ideas for the National Museum of Finland. While the meaning can be understood as a strategic foresight like a vision, the operational ideas are potential ways helping to achieve the vision in the near future.

The output of this project has an overweight on the operational level exemplified in the numbers of operational ideas. However, we have touched aspects of the strategic level in the project during which some thoughts about potential improvements in strategy emerged. Since we focussed more on the mentioned operational level, we did not go further into discussing and analyzing these potential improvements.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that it is worth to do further research and discussions about them in order to find out if and how these could support the National Museum of Finland on a strategic level, and even facilitate the way to become a pioneering museum of the future.



{ Conclusion }

Conclusion

"Surround Audience", Exhibition view, New Museum, New York
Photo by Benoit Pailley, 2015

4.2. Strategic Foresight

“Which cooperations with institutions and companies will leverage ideas and traffic in the future? What methods should be used in the future to generate new ideas for exhibitions?”

Established processes can facilitate the evolution of museums in a changing world.

Our world is changing rapidly in many fields: society, technology, environment and politics. Museums have to keep up with these changes in order to be contemporary hence attractive to the public. Analyzing trends, generating ideas and testing them will help to understand changes and to maintain attraction.

These processes or projects like ours have to be done in cycles. Establishing a process including methods will ensure that the museum will stay on track and will generate contemporary events and exhibitions. It is recommended that many stakeholders contribute to this process in order to guarantee a qualitative outcome proved from many perspectives. Establishing a good communication channel with stakeholders is also an important asset of the well working process.

Strategic cooperations can enable change, increase visibility and funding.

Input for the previous mentioned process can be sourced from diverse fields. The process itself for instance can be monitored by a service design agency. Building up strategic cooperations will bring fresh thoughts, new resources and increase visibility. Many

institutions are working with universities in order to develop new products or services; to recruit talented people; or cooperate with acknowledged companies to improve their own visibility and image. There are multiple ways how companies and also museums can benefit from strategic and also diverse cooperations.

Documentation and feedback can lead to great sources for future actions.

Gathering data is important for future research, projects and cooperations. Documenting statistics and feedback of stakeholders, in particular visitors, will help to understand, adapt and constantly improve the quality of the museum. Furthermore, collecting feedback is a starting point to communicate and engage with the stakeholders. Going on step further, promising corporations can emerge or even future exhibition can be designed with the help of the public.



Rainbow Stickers for rainbow week
Photo by The National Museum of Finland, 2017



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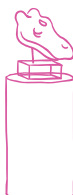




“It turns out that the killer application for virtual reality is other human beings. Build a world that people want to inhabit, and the inhabitants will come.”— Charles Stross

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